THE PRACTICE OF GODLINES; OR BRIEF RULES

Directing Christians how to keep their hearts in a constant holy frame, and how to order their conversation aright. With an Addition concerning *Self-Examination* and the *Nature* of *Faith*.

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Prov. 4. 23. *Keep thine heart with all diligence.*
Psal. 50. 23. *To him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I shew the salvation of God.*

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THE PREFACE. To the READER.

Reader.

IF thou art one that feareſt God, and wouldeſt gladly walk ſo as to pleaſe him, if thou deſireſt to exerciſe thy ſelf unto godlineſs, to follow after

righteousnesse, godlinesse, faith, love, patience, meeknesse, to fight the good fight of faith, to lay hold on eternall life, to get well through an evill world, and to keep thy self unspotted of it. This little Book was intended for thine use, and I hope thou wilt if thou shalt readit, find it fitted thereto. I confess upon a review of what I had done, in draving up these Directions, I begun to feare that I might injure the Reader by my studied brevity: I thought I am might overlook many things which are of speciall use in a Christian practice; because I have not insisted on them, but heaped them together in short laconismes; and that others which are more weak, might not so easily understand many

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things for want of a larger explication, or instance for the illustration of them: For I confess I was the more inturious in the composing hereof, because I had therein a chief respect to those that have attended my ministery, (wherein I have at severall times more fully explained the things contained therein) who will be able by these short memorials, (I hope) to call to mind what they have formerly heard, and after my departure, to have them in remembrance; but I was a little eased of my fears, when I considered that these things were of daily use to Christians, and therefore they would be put upon a frequent perusal of them, wherein they may more easily bothremark, & understand those things which in one

cursory reading, might escape their observation: And now Reader what arguments shall I use to encourage or perswade thee to follow these directions when thou hast read them; if there be any regard to be had to the glory of God, to the good of others, to the peace and happinesse of thine own soul, think on these things.

First, This is the way to glorifie God in your conversations, when you walk blamelesse, and harmlesse as his Children, without rebuke, shining as light in the world, Phil. 2. 15. Matt. 5. 16. John 15. 8. *and the name of God is dishonoured by the loose, careless walking of Christians,* Rom. 2. 23, 24.

Secondly, This will be a means

to recover the lost credit of Christianity, Christians are not so singular as they should be, Mat. 5. 47. *they are too much fashioned to this world,* Rom. 12. 2. *hereby prophane ones are hardened against the wayes of God, others confirmed in their prejudice against the principles of our profession, the imputation of Christs Righteousnesse to our justification, the necessity of his grace to our sanctification, and all the arguments which we can use to vindicate them from the imputation of cherishing licentiousnesse, will never convince gainsayers, unless we enforce them by the reall proofs of an holy conversation; see then that you walk circumspectly, that you may by well-doing put to silence the igno-*

rance of foolish men, 1 Pet. 2. 15. *That you may cut off occasion from those that desire occasion that wherein they glory, they may be found even as you,* 2 Cor. 11. 12.

3. *This will be a means to gain those that are without,* 1 Pet. 3. 1. *and to provoke to emulation, those that are within,* 2 Cor. 9. 2.

4. *This will be a good means to make your calling and election sure* 2 Pet. 1. 10. *compared with* ver. 5. *in the* 10. ver. *the Apostle doth but re-inforce his exhortation; in the* 5. ver. *by a new argument, as if he had said, the rather give diligence to add to faith virtue, &c. to the end you may make your calling and election sure.*

5. *This will be the way to have comfort*

comfort, both in life and death, the testimony of a good conscience will be a comfort to us in every condition, 2 Cor. 1. 12. *especially when we come to lye down in the dust of death,* 2 Tim. 4. 7. *Some will object (it may be) that this is more then needs, and why should we impose any unnecessary burden, upon Christians? to this I must say that it is an unsavoury objection, and not becoming a godly man. To enquire only what is necessary, and what we must do, if we will get to Heaven, argues more self-love, then love to God, more care of our own welfare, then of the glory of God, or how we may do those things which may please him.*

2. *If all the rules which I have given, be not necessary by vertue*

of any speciall command, (as I am sure most of them are,) yet they are necessary, as means to order our conversation aright. But if thine objection be intended chiefly against this particular modell, which I have drawn up, after so many Treatises on the same subject: I confesse then I shall not have so much to say against it, I freely acknowledg that many worthy men have laboured herein, more fit in many respects for such an undertaking then my self: and I must leave every one to their liberty, to use such helps as seem best to them; only this I shall say, that I think I have not only done that which was done before. Some have indeed writtten excellently at large of these things, but some

Christians

Christians cannot so easily read larger Treatises, nor so easily gather up the sum of them to carry in their mind, these short rules may be usefull to such; and those that have leisure, and opportunity, may make use of them for the clearer explication of these: some have written excellent brief manuals, but have insisted much upon such things as I have here purposly omitted, that I might not actum agere, *as vows, meditations, and the use thereof in quickening affections, and strengthening resolutions: if thou savourest the things that be of God, I dare commend to thee what hath been written on this subject, by my worthy friend* Mr Tho. White, *others have written indeed excellent things on*

this

this Subject; but there is in their books such a mixture of popish principles and superstition, that weaker Christians which have not their senses exercised to discern good and evill, can scarce without danger make use of them. In what I have here written, I know nothing that is called in question, by any sober man: for I have kept within the safe bounds of acknowledged truths, to free the Reader from all suspicion, (at least from all danger) of being misled into any unsafe paths: if any shall object against the strictness of this exercise, or course of life, I need say no more to shame such an objection, but to set before you some brief instances of the heathen piety shewing how far they went by the

light

light of nature in the observation of these rules which I have layed down; their high esteem of godlinesse in generall, above all other things, they very oft discover in their writings, but we have frequent instances of their practice thereof, in particular duties, as Prayer: It is said of Socrates, *that his life was nothing but a continuall Prayer, so frequent was he therein, one passage whereof is reported to be,* Date ut simpulcher intus, & honestus, *which is in effect the same with that of* David, *Psal.* 51. 10. Create in me a clean heart, and renew in me a right spirit. *Seneca is an eminent example of Ethick devotion, how we should improve the consideration of Gods omnipre-*

sence

ſence; See Sen. *Epiſt.* 10. *how we ſhould improve the conſideration of his providence,* Epiſt. 107. *how we ſhould exerciſe virtue in every condition*, Epiſt. 85. *How we ſhould apply our ſelves to God in Prayer,* Epiſt. 41. *How we ſhould behave ourſelves in Prayer,* Epiſt. 10. *what reſpect we ſhould have to the judgement to come,* Epiſt. 26. *How carefull we ſhould be in the ſpending of our times;* lib. de brevitate vitæ, *in which book he enveighs much againſt mens profuſe expence of their time, of which alone we may be innocently coveteous. Of the choice of our company*, Epiſt. 7. *and our carriage therein,* Epiſt. 10. Sic vive cum hominibus tanquam Deus videat, ſic loquere cum Deo

tanquam

tanquam homines audiant, *we ſhould ſo converſe with men as if God looked on, ſo ſpeak to God in Prayer, as if men heard us : and of taking an account of our ſelves every night, how we have ſpent the day paſt, we have an admirable example*, lib. 3. de Ira, cap. 36. *and this laſt was an ordinary practice with devouter heathens, concerning which, there are famous precepts of* Pythagoras, μήδ' ὕπνον καταχέοιν, κτλ.

i. e. Nec prius in dulcem declines, lumina ſomnum,
Omnia quam longi reputaveris acta diei,
Quo prætergreſſus, quid factum in tempore, quid non,
Sic dicta & facta per omnia ingrediens,

Ortuq;

Ortuq; & vespere cuncta revolvens,
Offensus pravis, da palmam & premia rectis.

Arriani Epictet. lib.3.cap.10. vid *Anson* Edyll.8. *Much more of this Subject we might be furnished with, out of* Plutarch, Epictetus, De la Moth le Vayer, de la vertu des Payens, *&c. To speak nothing of their putting out their eyes, casting away their riches, retiring from the society of men, that they might devote themselves to a contemplative life; practices which our Christian profession doth not require, nor the Scriptures allow, the former things having the approbation of the Word of God, and the concurrent practice, of holy men mentioned therein, may*

shame

ſhame Chriſtians that have more obligations upon them, more light, more means of grace, more aſſiſtance of the Spirit, then theſe heathens had.

Laſtly, Some may object againſt this courſe, that it is very difficult to obſerve ſo many rules, and this would make the Chriſtian life very burdenſome; To this I anſwer, firſt, as Biſhop Hall *ſaith, There is nothing to be gotten by idleneſſe, but miſery here, and Hell hereafter: The Kingdom of Heaven ſuffers violence, and the violent take it by force,* Mat. 11. 12. *A Chriſtians life is a race, a warfar, and he muſt run, ſtrive, fight, if he will win the prize,* 1 Cor. 9. 24, 25, 26. *he muſt watch and pray, and arm, and ſtand faſt, and*

quit

quit himself like a man, if he will obtain the Crown, Mat. 26. 41. 1 Cor. 16. 13. Eph. 6. 13. 2. *Thou knowest not how difficult this course is till thou hast bin exercised therein: who ever learned any art or mystery, but it seemed very difficult at first? which practice afterward makes easie: there is a mystery in practicall Godlinesse, as well as in speculative Divinity, which makes it seem hard at first; I know this is not acquired wholly by industry, and exercise, as other habits are, but exercise doth much facilitate it: again custom is the greatest Tyrant in the world,* Jer. 13. 23. *whose yoak it is an hard matter to cast off, in those things which afterwards we can easily contemn; how vain would*

those

thoſe wayes of ſin ſeem to many which now they are wedded to? how eaſie would thoſe wayes of holineſſe ſeem to them, the difficulty whereof doth ſo much affright them? if they would awake to righteouſneſſe and ſtir up themſelves to take hold on the Lord, 1 Cor. 15. 34. Eſai. 64. 7. not wavering betwixt God and the world, *Jam.* 1. 6. *(for then they are like to be driven and toſſed, with every wind of temptation)* but cleaving to the Lord with purpoſe of heart, *Act.* 11. 23. Quam ſuave mihi ſubito factum eſt, carere ſuavitatibus nugarum? quas amittere metus fuit, jam dimittere gaudium fuit, *ſaith* Auſtin, *Confeſſion,* lib. 9. cap. 1. *he had a long time been dallying with ſin, and his thoughts*

were

were fluctuating to and fro : but when they came to the consistency of a firm resolution, it was presently a pleasure to him, to want his former delightful vanities: and those things which before he was afraid to lose, he could now joyfully dismiss.

Finally, This practice will not be so difficult, as you may at first suspect: because these rules which I have laid down, are a great help to each other. One that had never seen a watch, or such like work of art, would wonder how so many wheels should keep such a constant orderly motion: whereas one that understands the manner of their motions, knows that one wheel doth protrude or thrust forward another, and that the motion could not easily

be

be ſo regular, if there were fewer wheels in it: ſo it is in this caſe one duty puts forward another, and doth diſpoſe us to the practice of another: or as in the body labour or exerciſe begets an appetite, when we have an appetite our food is more pleſant to us, and it likewiſe helps digeſtion, and ſo our foode doth us more good and ſtrengthens us to labour: ſo the more we exerciſe our ſelves unto Godlineſſe, the more experience we ſhall have of our own inſufficiency, and of the need that we ſtand in of a daily ſupply of the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt, and ſo we ſhall more prize and endeavour to improve thoſe ordinances which are the miniſtration of the ſpirit, as prayer and the Word of God: And therefore if men

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ſlight ordinances, tis an ill ſigne that they have grown negligent in the practice of godlineſſe, for he that ſets himſelf to walk ſo as he may pleaſe God, will find all means little enough to maintain the vigour of his grace; and the more we improve our communion with God in ordinances, the better ſhall we be enabled to hold on in a courſe of godlineſs; that as it is in the body naturall and miſticall, one member is uſefull to another, ſo it is in theſe duties. I may alſo add, that the benefits of ſuch a practice, (which I have before recounted) will abundantly recompence any diligence which we can uſe therein: which hath been confirmed by the experience of thoſe which have been exerciſed

therein:

therein: as you may ſee in Mr Rogers *his Seaven Treatiſes, where he tels us* Treat. 4. cap. 11. *of divers Godly men, who when they were at firſt put upon ſuch a courſe as is here preſcribed, looked upon it as a thing impoßible to be obſerved, but being perſwaded to make triall of it, they freely acknowledgedthat they found and obtained more uſe of their knowledg, more conſtancy in their courſe, and ſweet delight in ſerving of God, then ever they looked for, and hereby they came to be better able to perform duties, to beare croſſes and afflictions, to ſubdue their affections, and to overcome their doubts and fears: methinks the hope of like ſucceſſe, ſhould encourage any that make religion*

their

their businesse, to make triall of this practice, those that have more objections, yet to make against it, may find them answered in Drexelius *his* Trismegistus, *lib.* 1. *cap.* 7. *And now Reader I may conclude in the words of Bishop* Sales, *in the* Preface *to his Introduction*: [*I confess I have writ of a devout life, without being devout my self: yet not without a desire of being so, and it is this desire which hath given me courage to instruct thee: for as a great learned man said, to study is a good way to learn, to hear is a better, but to teach is best of all.*] *The truth is, I entertained the first thoughts of making these directions thus publique, whilst I was drawing up somewhat for my own*

use:

use : hoping they might do others more good then my self, which might have better hearts to make use of them,(as indeed I should oft preach with an heavy heart, were it not for hopes that many that hear me, may be more affected with what I speak, then I can get my own dull heart to be,) but I was further encouraged to this work, when I considered what an obligation it would be upon my self, to the most earnest endeavours in the practice of those things which I have thus pressed upon others: for if I should chuse my devise, it should be those words of the Apostle Rom. 2. 21. *Which I shall as oft suppose my self to heare sounding in mine ears, as* Jerome *did the last Trumpet,*

Thou that teacheſt another, teacheſt thou not thy ſelf? *and I deſire this little Book may come into remembrance with me to ſhame when ever I ſhall) through inadvertency or any other infirmity) ſwerve from theſe rules my ſelf, which I have here ſet down for the uſe of others.*

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THE PRACTICE OF GODLINES.

LAbour to improve your acknowledged principles concerning God. I meane ſuch principles as are generally without diſpute, or Heſitancy aſſented to: unleſſe you think the Word of God to be a cunningly deviſed fable, 2 *Pet.*

1.16. or that the Kingdom of God is in in word only, and not in power, 1 *Cor.* 4.20. that religion is but an empty sound, of no use or vertue, let your faith as the Apostle saith of patience, *Jam.* 1.4. *have its perfect work*, use it as far as it will go, and you shall find what an influence it will have upon your whole Conversation, true knowledg is the foundation of all Religion, *Jer.* 22.16. *Eph.* 4.18. and that knowledg is not right, which is not operative and effectuall, *Joh.* 2. 3,4. Now there are three things more especially, a fixed apprehension and serious consideration whereof, will be of singular use to us in all the passages of our lives.

First,

Firſt, The all-ſufficiency of God, *Gen.* 17. 1. This makes him the chief good, for this we chooſe him as our portion, and chief happineſſe: now this is the firſt ſtep which the ſoul takes towards Heaven, this goes in order before Faith, and Faith is but ſubordinate hereto, this being the act of the ſoul about our chief end; Faith reſpecting the means leading to this end: why do we beleeve on Jeſus Chriſt? but that we may by him be brought unto God, 1 *Pet.* 3. 18. theſe two acts are the brief abridgement of the Goſpel, *Act.* 20. 21. ſo that we ſee this is eſſentiall to Chriſtianity to take God for our chief happineſſe; Now if this were but ſetled in

onr hearts, how would it ballaſt them and keep them ſteddy, that they would not be toſſed up and down with the various occurrences of this life, neither lift up with proſperity, nor caſt down with adverſity, for whether we have more of theſe things they make no conſiderable addition to us, God is our happineſſe and not rhe Creature, or whether we have leſſe of theſe things, it is no diminution to our happineſſe, we ſtill have our portion; we are but as man that hath turned his eſtate into money, though he have not houſes, nor lands, nor flocks, nor herds: yet he hath that which anſwers all things, *Eccleſ.* 10. 19. ſo it is with one that hath God for his portion,

whoſe

whoſe is the earth, and the fulneſs thereof, Hab. 3. 17, 18. 1 Cor. 10. 28. 2 Cor. 6. 10. give 20. pounds to apoore man, and you make him, take ſo much from him and you undoe him: but it is nothing in a rich mans purſe that hath thouſands coming in yearly: let an unbeleever looſe the world and he looſes all, he complains with *Laban* that his gods are gone, let him have theſe things in abundance, and he is tranſported like *Haman,* Eſter 5. 11, 12. but theſe are ſmall things with him, whoſe portion the Lord is.

2. A ſecond thing which we ſhould alwayes labour for a ſerious apprehenſion of, is Gods omnipreſence: by his eſſence and

common providence, *he is in all places*, Psal. 139. 6. *&c. and he beholds all things that are done by the sons of men*, Heb. 4. 13. but he is graciously present in a speciall manner with his own people, *Esai.* 43. 2, 5. Now to walk before God, to set his presence before our eyes, doth briefly comprehend all religion, *Gen.* 17. 1. *cap.* 24. 40.

1. This will awe us when we have opportunities and temptations to secret sins, *Gen.* 39. 9. the story is known of *Paphnutius* who converted an *Harlot* by this means.

2. This would possesse us with more *reverence and Godly feare in duties of Gods words*, 1 Cor. 11. 10. if the presence of Angels should

ſhould do this, much more the preſence of God.

3 *This will comfort us in afflions*, Pſal. 23. 4, 25, 14. *Encourage us againſt fears*, Pſal. 16.8. yea, provoke us to diligence in every good work, *the eye of the maſter makes a diligent ſervant*, Col. 3. 22,

3. A third thing which we ſhould alwayes let ſettle in our hearts, is the univerſall providence of God, extending it ſelf to every thing which comes to paſſe here below, to *that which is good*, Gen. 31. 16, 33, 5, 11. *that which is evill*, Eſai. 42. 25. Amos 3. 6. to *the leaſt things*, Mat. 10. 28. to thoſe things which are produced by a long ſeries of ſecond cauſes, *Hoſ.* 2. 22.

Gen. 45. 5. to the meereſt contingencies, *Prov.* 16. 33. Now beſides the occaſion which we ſhall have hereby given us to adore *the perfections of God in all his works*, Pſal. 8. Job 37. 14. Pſal. 107. 43. We ſhall have this advantage hereby, in the enjoyment of mercies.

Firſt, It will teach us thankfulneſſe for them, *Pſal.* 40. 5.

2. Prevent our abuſe of them and teach us to uſe them for God, *Hoſ.* 2. 8. *Ezek.* 16. 19. In afflictions this will teach us firſt to ſubmit patiently to them, as being inflicted by his authority, ordered by his wiſe providence, 1 *Sam.* 3. 18. Job 1. 21. Joh. 19. 11. Pſal. 46. throughout.

2. Teach

2. Teach us to make a right uſe of them, *Mic. 6. 9. Eſai. 42. 25.* by theſe inſtances which I have ſet down, you may likewiſe be directed how to improve other articles of your faith.

2. Direct. *What ever you do in word or deed do all in the name of Jeſus Chriſt.* This direction is in the very words of the Apoſtle, *Col. 3. 17.* and though it be a brief direction, yet there is none that is of more generall and conſtant uſe, it is like the carpenters ſquare or rule, which he makes uſe of upon all occaſions, there is not an action of our lives wherein we have not ſome uſe hereof: Now to do a thing in the name of Chriſt, imports theſe three things.

1. To

1. To do it by the authority of Chriſt, *Mat.* 21. 23. *John* 5. 43. 1 *Cor.* 5. 4.

2. In the power and ſtrength of Chriſt, *Mark* 16, 17. *Act.* 3. 12, 16. *Pſal.* 20. 5.

3. For the ſake of Chriſt, or for his honour, *Luk.* 9. 48. *Mat.* 18. 20. So the *Dutch Annotations* on the place, and the learned *Daille* in his excellent Sermon on the ſame. 1. Then let us make God of our counſell in whatever we take in hand, *Eſai.* 30. 1. *Hoſ.* 8. 4. 1. Becauſe of the abſolute authority that he hath over us, 1 *Cor.* 6. 21. 1 *Kin.* 18. 21. 2. the dependance we have on his providence, tis wiſdom to make a vertue of a neceſſity, if we

we will venture to do a thing without his morall permiſſion, or leave: we cannot do it without his naturall permiſſion, *Eſai.* 54. 15. *Jer.* 42. 15. 3. We muſt give an account to him of our actions, he is our judge, as well as our law giver, *Jam.* 4. 12. 2 *Cor.* 5. 10. 4. When we have Gods leave, we may go on with comfort, and confidence, *Prov.* 10. 29. We are under his ſpeciall care and providence, *Pſal.* 84. 11. Mr *Dod* would ſay he cared not where he was, if he could but anſwer theſe two queſtions well, who am I? and what do I here, am I a Child of God, and am I in my way, if we were careful of the diſcharg of our duty, we might free our ſelves from all other care, but

as

as it is the humour of every man naturally, to look more after other mens affairs then his own: ſo we deale after the ſame manner with God, we buiſie our ſelves about his work, the event and ſucceſſe of our affairs, which belong to his providence to order and direct: and in the meane while neglect our own duty, leaving that to God, uſually upon pretence of the neceſſity of his determining grace, which doth no more make void our endeavours in ſpirituall actions, then the neceſſity of the concurrence of his generall providence in our naturall actions.

Now for knowing the mind of God in what we go about, we have his word to direct

rect us. In particular caſes where we have no expreſſe rule for our direction, our end muſt direct us, the edification of ſouls, 1 *Cor.* 10. 23. and the glory of God, of which more afterwards, beſides God doth by his providence ſometimes, and ſometimes by making ſtrong impreſſions upon the will, *Act.* 20. 22. give ſome hints of his mind, *vid. Vald.* Conſid. 25. but to be ſure we muſt make the former our chief rules to guid us, and follow theſe laſt only, when the word is not cleare, and where neither of thoſe mentioned ends which we ſhould propound to our ſelves, do turn the ballance, but it remains ſtill equally poyſed: otherwiſe we may take the violent inclinations

of

of our own luſts, for an impreſſi-
on of the ſpirit, and a temptati-
on for a leading providence, *Deu.* 13. 3. ſee 1 *Sam.* 24. 5, 6, 7.

2. What we do we ſhould do in the ſtrength of Chriſt, waiting upon him for the concurrence of his generall providence in our ordinary, naturall, and civill actions, *Jam.* 4. 15. of his more ſpeciall providence in extraordinary actions, 1 *Sam.* 17. 45. 2 *Chron.* 14. 11. and of his ſpeciall grace in ſpirituall actions, *Eph.* 6. 10. *Phil.* 4. 13. 2 *Tim.* 2. 1. So that we ſhould *commit all our wayes unto the Lord*, Prov. 16. 3. venturing upon nothing in our practiſes, which we dare not commend to God, for a bleſſing in our prayers; our ordinary af-

fairs,

fairs, we may commit to him by a generall recommendation in our daily Prayers, extraordinary affairs by a more particular ſolemn addreſſing our ſelves to him, *Gen.*32.10.*Neh.*1.4.*Eſt.*4. 16.ſudden emergencies, by ſhort ſecret ejaculations, *Neh.* 2. 4. This practice would make us deſiſt from many raſh undertakeings: we many times unadviſedly ruſhing upon thoſe things which we ſhould not have a face to own before God in Prayer: as the poore man when he had ſtollen a lamb for the neceſſities of his family, when having made it ready, he came (as his manner was) to pray for a bleſſing upon it, his heart ſmot him, ſo that he could have no peace till he

went

went and acknowledged his ſin, and made a promiſe of reſtitution, 3. We ſhould do all for the glory of Chriſt, 1 *Cor.*10.32. 1. This is the ultimate end of all things, *Prov.*16.4. *Rom.* 11.36. 2. This will ſanctifie all our naturall and civill actions, adopting them as it were into the number of religious actions, and inſcribing them with holineſſe to the Lord, *Zach.* 14. 21. *Col.* 3. 23, 24.

The pooreſt ſervant by diſcharging his duty in a right manner, and directing his intention aright, may in the meaneſt imployment ſerve Jeſus Chriſt, and with confidence expect his reward from him.

3. Without this our ſpiritual actions

actions are not good, *Zach.* 7. 7.

4. This will preſcribe a right manner and meaſure to all our lawfull actions, I mean ſuch as are in themſelves lawfull, as eating, drinking, recreations, and ſuch like: *finis dat modum & menſuram mediis*; and herein Chriſtians had need to be very circumſpect, becauſe they ſin moſt frequently in ſuch actions, it is ſaid of *Sodom*, Mat. 24. 38. that *they were eating, drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage*, there was no hurt in theſe actions, if they had obſerved a due ſeaſon, manner, and meaſure in them. Chriſtians ſtartle at ſuch ſins as ſwearing, lying, ſtealing, adultery, *&c.* but in the uſe

of

of things lawfull, they are more ſecure, and ſo do more eaſily ſlide into a ſinfull exceſſe.

5. This will direct us (as was beforehinted) where our way is doubtfull, where we have expreſs commands, or prohibitions in the Word of God, our way is plain, there is no queſtion to be made, but in many caſes our actions are not determined by any particular direct command, but are left to be guided by Chriſtian prudence, now in ſuch a caſe, our end will be of much uſe to guid us, as a man that is to draw a line, if he have no rule to make it by, he oft caſts his eye upon that term, or point to which it is to be drawn, or if a man have a way to go, and there be no beaten

path, if he can ſee the place which he is to go to, his way is to aime at that, and make ſtraight over towards it, ſo when a caſe is doubtfull, we ſhould fix our eye upon the glory of God, and ſee which way hath the moſt direct tendency thereto, and take that way. Now though we cannot alwayes haue an actuall intention of the glory of God. yet we ſhould habitually intend it, and the more we can actually intend it the better; eſpecially in ſuch actions as are of moment in the courſe of our lives, we ſhould renew our actuall intention; and (as was ſaid before) when a caſe is doubtfull, we ſhould fix our eye upon this end, as a man that is travelling

towards

towards a place suppose to *London*, he doth not actually think on the place which he goes to every step he takes, but if he come to a place where there are two wayes, then he bethinks himself of the place which he is going to, that he may take that way which is more likely to lead him thereto.

And if any ask now how our naturall or civill actions conduce to the glory of God? I answer.

First, They may be done to the glory of God, in respect of the manner of them, when we use such moderation, holy feare, heavenly mindednesse in these actions, that every one may see holinesse written upon them. *We*

eat (ſaith *Tertullian of the Chriſtians,*) *as much us is neceſſary to ſatisfie ones appetite, we drink as much as is permitted to Chriſtians that have a care of their purity, they that ſit there take their refection with ſuch temperance, as they may remember they are obleiged to worſhip God at night*, Apol. cap. 39. 1 *Tim.* 6. 1. *Tit.* 2. 10.

2. In reſpect of their ultimate tendency, they may be ſubſervient to the glory of God, though they have not ſuch an immediate connexion therewith, as when we uſe diligence in our particular callings that we may have wherewith to ſupply the neceſſities of others, *Eph.* 4. 28. to provide for thoſe belonging to our own charge, 1 *Tim.* 5. 8. that we

may

may with the more freedome wait upon God, being exempted from perplexing cares, 1 *Cor.* 7. 35. that we may be freed from the temptations of poverty, and may not be burdenſome to others, *Prov.* 30. 9. 1 *Theſ.* 4. 11. So when we ſtudy that we may excell for the edifying of the Church, 1 *Cor.* 14. 12. When we eate, drink, uſe recreations that our bodies may be ſtrengthened, *Eccleſ.* 10. 17. that ſo they may be the more fit to ſerve the ſoul in its operations, that we may by both ſoul and body be more fit to honour God in our places, ſo in our civill viſits, we ſhould conſider what they will contribute to our chief end, what oportunity we may have

have of doing or receiving good, how far our Christian profession requires this of us, that *we may shew all gentlenesse towards all men*, Tit. 3. 2. *and add to brotherly kindnesse, charity*, 2 Pet. 1. 7.

3. *Direct.* 3. Prize all opertunities of communion with God in his ordinances, such as prayer, reading and hearing the word: Christian prudence must alot the time for these, according to our occasions, opportunities, necessities, *Psal.* 42. 1, 2. & 63. 1, 2. & 84. 1, 2. & 122. 1.

First, They are our duty, part of that homage which we owe to God as our Lord and Lawgiver, by prayer to acknowledge our dependance on him, *Psal.* 65. 2.

 and

and our ſubjection to him, by ſitting down at his feet to receive the law from his mouth, to take our inſtruction from him, *Deut.* 33. 3.

2. They are our priviledges, which coſt two of the greateſt gifts which Heaven could afford, *Eph.* 2. 17. *The Son of God, that we might have acceptance, the Spirit of God that we might have aſſiſtance*, what greater priviledge are we capable of, then at any time to go and *reveale our cauſe to God*, Jer. 20. 21. to *eaſe our complaints before him*, to have leave to begge *anything of him*, Joh. 15. 8. Luk. 11. 13. to *ask counſell of him*, Pſal. 119. 24. eſpecially when his word is the miniſtration of the ſpirit, 2 *Cor.* 3. 6.

3. 6. *Gal.* 3. 2. there being in our communion with God, a transfusion of spirits, he communicating his spirit or divine nature to us therein, 2 *Cor.* 3. 18. besides our own pressing necessities which should daily provoke us hereto; *the oftner we come to God the more welcome,* Cant. 2. 14. Jer. 2. 32. and the more boldnesse and liberty of accesse we shall have, disuse and infrequency breeding a strangnesse betwixt God and the soul, and deading the heart to communion with him.

4. *Direct.* Be very serious in the performance of holy duties, be carefull to joyn therein *attention of mind,* Ezek. 33. 32. *sincerity of heart,* Psal. 145. 18. *in-*

tention of affections, Rom. 12. 11. Act. 26. 7. *and holy feare and reverence*, Heb. 12. 28. Chriſtians are very faulty in this particular, for beſides their rude irreverent behaviour in holy duties, when the beſt ſupply that we can make to the defect of our prayers, (after our hearts have been roving and wandering therein, notwithſtanding the ſtricteſt hand that we can keep over them,) is by re-collection of all the ſtrength of our ſouls to enforce them in an hearty *Amen*. You ſhall have men off their knees, (if ever they were on them) or ready to run away from the duty when it grows towards an end, as if they were glad that ſuch a task were done; Verily I

have

have oft wondered how ſuch prophaneſſe in divine worſhip ſhould be conſiſtent with the *feare of God*, and yet been loath to condemn thoſe that are guilty of it, we ought to give the more diligent heed herein, becauſe there is the ſame time ſpent in the ſlight performance of duties, which is ſpent in a right performance of them, and a man had better ſow his ground with good ſeed though it coſt him deare, then with darnell or eockle, though he can have it for nothing, and as we loſe the fruit of our duties, and anſwer of our prayers when we are ſlight in them, ſo we loſe the ſweetneſſe that is to be had in communion with God in them, and that is

the reaſon we come with ſuch dead hearts to duties, and we had need be watchfull herein, becauſe Satan is very buſie to interrupt us in holy duties, *Luk.* 8. 12. *Zach.* 3. 1. and our own hearts are very apt to wander therein, *Bernard* ſadly complains of this in his devout meditations, *cap.* 8. how he ſcarce could attend to his own prayers, or mind what he ſaid in them himſelf, and ſo loſt the fruit of them, ſee *Dike* on the heart, *cap.* 21.

Now for our help therein, let us firſt conſider the nature of God with whom we have to do, he is a great king, and his name is dreadfull, *Mal.* 1. 14. read that Chapter throughout, he will not bear it to be put off with

ſlight

ſlight ſervices, he will have none of his work done negligently, *Jer.* 48. 10. he will be *ſanctified of all ſuch as draw neigh to him,* Lev. 10 3. he will be *ſerved with fear and trembling,* Pſal. 2. 11. trembling at the Word of God is the Character of a godly man, *Eſai.* 66. 2,4. *Ezra* 10. 3.

2. Let us conſider the nature of the ſervices wherein we have to do with him, and we may conſider them under a threefold notion. Firſt, as duties, this will lay an awe upon our conſciences and keep us to a due conſtant obſervance of them, it is dangerous to free our conſciences from this obligation by laying aſide the opinion of duty, for we ſee by experience how eaſily men are

tempted to a neglect of thoſe things which they look upon as only matter of liberty, and not as neceſſary duty, 2. Let us conſider them as priviledges, this will keep us from that wearineſſe which is ready to grow upon us in them, while we conſider them only as burdenſome tasks, *Mal.* 1. 13.

2. And from reſting in the work done, which we ſhall be apt to do if we look upon them only as duties.

3. Let us conſider them as Talents which we muſt give an account of, for ſo they are if we look upon them as means of grace, *Luk.* 12. 48. this will quicken us up to more earneſt diligence in the improvement of them,

them, and for prayer in particular let me add this one word, whenever we draw nigh to God in it, but let us conſider what it is, or what we are about, *viz.* The making our requeſt known to God, by *prayer and ſupplication with thanksgiving*, Phil. 4.6. That ſo we may be furniſhed with expreſſions, not from our heads, but from our hearts, that our words may not be fetched from our memories or inventions, bur from our reall deſires and inward affectoins.

Direct. 5. Be very carefull not to neglect known duties, we uſe to obſerve in polemicall divinity; that the plaineſt truths are leaſt ſtudied, becauſe they are taken for granted, and ſo men

think they need not buisie themselves about them. I wish we could not make the like observation in practicall divinity, though there is not the like reason for the neglect of the practice that there is of the study of those things which we know, *the end of knowledge is practice*, Deut. 29. 29. But so it is usually, that men are very inquisitive into those things which are doubtful as if they wanted matter for the exercise of their zeal, or as if they would complement with God as they sometimes do with men, telling him in effect that they do but wait for an opportunity to serve him, when they over look ordinary acknowledged duties, like the Jews which were

very

very forward to enquire whether they ſhould faſt as they had done formerly, and in the mean while they neglected the duties of morality, *Mic. 6. 7.* the greateſt queſtioniſts are many times the leaſt doers, but as *Luther* would ſay, *God loves not Quariſtas but Curriſtas*, not ſuch as will be alwayes enquiring, but ſuch as will be active or doing, if you would know more of the mind of God in things that are doubtfull, do more of what you already know, *John 7. 17.*

Dirct. 6. Labour to know the true bounds of your Chriſtian liberty. Not that you may walk to the utmoſt extent of it, for the ſatisfying of your naturall deſires, nor that you may for any

carnall

carnall intereſt baſely comply with mens humours, but yet there may be great uſe of this, both in reſpect of our ſelves and others: men do oft lay unneceſſary burdens upon themſelves, binding themſelves where God hath looſed them to their own great prejudice, like thoſe 1 *Cor.* 8. 7. inſtances whereof are very obvious.

But Chriſtians do uſually moſt wrong others hereby. Firſt, in judging them, and caſting them out of their charity for thoſe things which they have liberty in, or which they may lawfully do, *ſtrong Chriſtians are not more ready to deſpiſe the weak, then the weak are to judge the ſtrong*, Rom. 14. 3. and I know not

not which is the greater ſin, the former for the moſt part is worſe in reſpect of its principle from whence it proceeds, but the latter in reſpect of the effects of it; but Secondly, We further wrong others in that we do not leave our ſelves a liberty where God hath left it us, for accommodating our ſelves to them, and pleaſing them *for their good to edification*, or as others have it, *in that which is good*, where we have the true bounds ſet to men pleaſing, for the matter it muſt be in that which *is good*, we muſt not pleaſe their ſinfull humours, or comply with their corrupt luſts: then there muſt be a right end, it muſt be for *their edification*, Rom. 15. 2. and this rule the

the Apoſtle himſelf put in practice, 1 *Cor.* 9. 19. *Cap.* 10. 33.

Direct. 7. Labour to make the beſt improvement of your time, the Apoſtle indeed exhorts to *redeem time*, which is an expreſſion of doubtfull ſignification, and capable of various interpretations, but in propriety of ſpeech, time that is loſt is not poſſible to be redeemed: we cannot poſſibly recover miſpent time: If a man ſuffer weeds to grow in his field, though he pluck them up before they ſeed, or ſoyl his corn, yet he loſes ſo much ground as they grow upon: ſo though God ſhould pardon the miſpending of our time, yet we ſhall loſe the fruit of what we

might

might have (in that time) ſowen to the ſpirit; and as good huſbands will loſe none of their ground, but have every parcell bring them forth ſomething, ſo we ſhould endeavour that every parcell of our time may be ſown with ſome fruits of righteouſneſſe, yea, we ſhould make ſome improvement of that time in which we do the works of our particular callings to ſome ſpirituall advantage, (if our imployments be ſuch as exerciſe the hand and not the head) by ſome uſefull meditations; as ſome will plant their hedg-rowes with fruit trees, reckoning that what they get thereby is cleare gain, becauſe they take up no room which might be put to any other

uſe,

uſe, ſo what we get by ſuch meditations is clearly gained, becauſe it doth not hinder any other imployment. But as it is not enough for the husbandman to ſow all his ground, but he muſt obſerve what agrees beſt with this or that grain, and as it is not ſufficient that he be alwayes employed, unleſſe he obſerve the due ſeaſon for his ſeverall affairs, ſo it is not ſufficient that we be alwaies doing that which is materially good, but there muſt be a prudent choice of the fitteſt ſeaſon for every action, for *there is for every purpoſe a time and judgement*, therefore is the miſery of man great upon him, becauſe few men have the wiſdom to know time and judgment, *Ec.* 8. 5, 6.

8.5,6. but he is the bleſſed man that *brings forth fruit in its ſeaſon*, Pſal. 1. 3. Yet let not your ſouls enter into the ſecrets of thoſe, who ſeeming to themſelves to have a perfect underſtanding of the times and ſeaſons wherein the things foretold in Scripture ſhall have their accompliſhment, think themſelves bound to attempt ſuch things as they ſuppoſe may be helpfull to the bringing forth of that which the divine providence ſeems to be travelling with, calling this the work of the day, or of their generation. The good man *Moſes* ran into this miſtake, but he was glad to flee for it, and keep ſheep fourty years, till he had a more clear call from God, to undertake

dertake that work which he before knew God had deſigned him for *Act.* 7. 23, *&c.* More particularly let us endeavour to improve our time well when we are in company, and when we are alone, for ſociety and ſolitude ſhare our time. Firſt, In company, let us labour to do good or to get good, at leaſt that we do no hurt nor receive any: and to that end, avoid (as much as may be) the ſociety of thoſe with whom we are like neither to do or receive good, and thoſe are ſuch as are prophane ſcorners and ſuch as are meerly carnall, and are much our ſuperiours: and when you are in company make conſcience of your words, 1. becauſe we are very apt to offend

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in them, 2. there is speciall *notice taken of them*, Mal. 3. 16. and 3. *We must give an account of them*, Mat. 12. 36, 37. and that we may never want matter of usefull discourse, let us alwayes be furnished with some profitable questions to propound, 1 *King.* 10. 1, *&c.* Which we may be supplyed with, either from what we hear or read daily of the Word of God, or some passages of Gods Providence, or our own experience, and this will be usefull both to our selves and others, we may hereby increase our own knowledg, and give others occasion for imploying their Talents, which many times lye wrapped up uselesse, either through too much reserved-

nesse

neſſe or ſlowneſſe of ſpeech, or an over-awing modeſty, or becauſe men know not ſo well how to ſuit their diſcourſes to the conditions and capacities of others: and it will not be altogether in vain to propound queſtions to thoſe that are our equals or below us in underſtanding: we may likewiſe take occaſion from ordinary occurrences to raiſe ſpirituall diſcourſes, which was Chriſts uſuall practice, *Joh.* 4. 10, 6, 26. but it is ever neceſſary that we obſerve the tempers, faculties, abilities, capacities, conditions of thoſe with whom we have to do? that we may accommodate our ſelves (as far as may be) thereunto, this will render our ſociety more acceptable

ceptable to others, more profitable both to others and our selves, by observing mens tempers we may the more easily insinuate what we please into them: by observing their faculties and abilities, we may both please them and profit our selves: because men love to discourse of things belonging to their own faculties, or wherein their abilities chiefly lye, and about those things we may expect the most satisfying answers from them, if they be such things as may be any advantage to us to know: if we suit our discourses to mens conditions, it will add much *grace and comlinesse to our speech*, Prov. 15. 23. & 25. 11. but if we do not in all things ap-

ply

ply our selves to mens capacities, we shall but weary them, and what we labour to poure into them will run beside, *Joh.* 16. 12. *Rom.* 14. 1. But remember still to be *swift to hear, slow to speak*, Jam. 1. 19. to *shew all meeknesse towards all men, to speak evill of none*, unlesse you be called thereto, *Tit.* 3. 2. to be sparing of your promises, and as sparing of your secrets, unlesse to such whose faithfulnesse, you have good experience of, or unlesse they leave as much in pawn with you as you trust with them.

And lastly, Joyn prudence with innocence, that you may neither do wrong nor receive any, *Mat.* 10. 16. *Ps.* 101. 2.

2. Labour

2. Labour to ſpend your time well when you are alone; *Take heed to your ſpirits*, Mal. 2. 17. there is the *beginning of all miſchief*, Mat. 15. 19. then is the ſeaſon for Satan to come and deal with us about his works of darkneſſe, which he hath to put us upon, therefore we ſhould prevent him by ſome good and profitable exerciſe; if *David* had taken this courſe, 2 *Sam.* 11. how much evill might it have prevented? how much work have we lying upon our hands to take up every ſpare minute of our lives? how many things are we ignorant of which we may imploy our ſolitary time about in informing our ſelves by reading the Word of God, or uſing the help

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of others which we have ready at hand in ſuch abundance? or if we cannot read the Scriptures or ſome other good books, as in a journey or in our beds in the night, how much work have we to do upon our hearts? how many affections to quicken by holy meditation? how many doubts to reſolve, and queſtions to anſwer concerning our own ſpirituall condition by ſelf-examination? And for your help in theſe exerciſes,

1. Labour to have the *Word of God dwelling richly in you*, Prov. 6.22. Mat. 12.35.

2. Have this good treaſure in your heart diſpoſed into ſome order, when our thoughts lye on a confuſed heap, we cannot

ſo

ſo eaſily find out what we have occaſion to uſe, let us ſometimes *look upward to God*, consider his nature, his attributes, *Pſal.* 104. 34. his wiſdome, goodneſſe, power, faithfulneſſe, which he hath proclaimed in his word, manifeſted in his works, eſpecially in that work of his manifold wiſdome, which is the ſubject of Angels meditation, *Eph.* 3. 10. 1 *Pet.* 1. 11. Sometimes be *looking backward on the wayes of Gods providence toward you*, Pſal. 139. 8, &c. 2 Sam. 22. 1. &c. *on your wayes towards God*, 1 Tim. 1. 13. Sometimes *look downwards into your own hearts*, see what work of God you can find there, what remainders of ſin are ſtill there. Sometimes *look forward towards*

your end, Meditate on Death, Judgement, Heaven, Hell. So there are other *uſefull Subjects,* as the love of God, the excellency of Chriſt, the vanity of the World, the ſinfullneſſe of ſinne, the deceitfullneſſe of the heart, which Chriſtians of ordinary capacities that are acquainted with the Scriptures, and uſe to heare Sermons, may eaſily improve by Meditation to the quickening of their affections, and ſtrengthening their reſolutions, and make your choice of theſe Subjects to meditate on according to your preſent ſtate; as in proſperity oft be thinking of ſuch things as may keep your hearts low, as your former condition and Gods gracious providence in raiſing

you up, if your condition have formerly been worse, *Gen.* 32. 10. 2 *Sam.* 7. 18. however of the vanity of the Creature, the brevity of life, the joys of Heaven, *&c.* in adversity chose such matter of Meditation, as may be most fit to work you to patience and contentednesse, *Mic.* 7. 9. *Ezra* 9. 13. and then *make diligent search into your own hearts*, Psal. 77. 6.

3. Raise up matter of holy Meditation from earthly things; God hath done much for our help in this exercise, by holding forth Heavenly mysteries in his word, in similitudes taken from earthly things, so that almost every Creature, every action may suggest some usefull Meditation

to us, if we be travelling, if we ſee a pleaſant way and much company, we do not conſider that, but what way it is that leads to the place we go to, ſo though *the way of ſinne be pleaſant to the fleſh, and moſt walk in it,* Mat. 7. 13, 14. that ſhould be no temptation to us, becauſe that doth not lead to Heaven whither we go. If we meet with bad lodging or mean entertainment at our Inne, we know it is but for a night, and we ſhall have better when we come to our journeys end, ſo though we have but bad entertainment in this world, we are but ſtrangers, this is but our Inne, we ſhall be better accomodated when we come to thoſe *Manſions which Chriſt is gone be-*

fore to prepare for us, Joh. 14. 2. The like Meditations may be raised from most occurrences of our life.

Direct. 8. Let us continually set before us the perfect pattern of our Lord Jesus, we are more easily led by examples then precepts, and Christ is the only perfect pattern, others are to be followed so far only as they follow him, 1 *Cor.* 11. 1.

Not that all the actions of Christ are immitable, he was not meer man, but God also, and Mediatour betwixt God and Man, and what he did as God, or as Mediatour we cannot imitate him in, but there are divers things wherein the Scripture propounds his examples to us

for imitation, As

1. *Love*, Eph. 5. 1, 2. 1 Joh. 3. 16.

2. *Meeknesse and Humility*, Mat. 11. 29. Joh. 13. 14. Rom. 15. 3.

3. *Self-denialle*, Mat. 16. 24. Phil. 2. 3, &c. 2 Cor. 8. 9.

4. *Patience*, 1 Pet. 2. 21.

5. *Making it his work to do good*, Act. 10. 38. and these are graces which carry a great stroak in all the passages of our lives.

Now the example of Christ doth not only serve for our direction, so as we should oft think with our selves in the conduct and management of the affairs of our life, what Christ himself would do, or how he would carry himself in such a

case

caſe, were he upon earth again as formerly, that we may behave our ſelves after the ſame manner, but 2. It may be for our encouragement, he is of a mean baſe ſpirit that will not follow where his generall leades: Therefore *Cato* when he was to lead his ſouldiers through a place of danger and difficulty, told them he would go before them, and they ſhould not ſee him drink while they were thirſty, nor take his eaſe while they were weary, not ſee any thing in him which ſhould difference him at all from a common ſouldier, *Lucan. lib. 9.* So Chriſt may ſay to us, he took upon him the *meaneſt condition*, Phil. 2. 6. there is nothing which he calls us to ſuffer, but he hath

suffered worse for us, why should not we then *take up our crosse and go after him?* Yea, 2. after his suffering he was *Crowned with Glory*, Heb. 12. 2, 3. So *if we suffer with him, we shall also be glorified with him*, Rom. 8. 17. Mat. 19. 28.

Direct. 9. Every night take an account of the passages of the day past, and examine your selves how you have observed the forementioned rules, what the constant frame of your heart hath been, what you have done, upon what grounds, whether it have been with the warrant of Gods Word, for what end, whether it hath had any tendency to the glory of God, any subserviency to your chief end, whether that

have

have been in your intention, what opportunities you have neglected of communion with God; what hath been the carriage of your heart in holy duties, how you have behaved your ſelves in company, what good you have done, whether any have been the better for you, or you for them, what you have taken into *the good treaſure of your hearts, and what you have laid out*, Matth. 12. 35. what temper your heart hath been in when alone, and ſo you may goe over the ſeverall paſſages of the day: hereby you will alwayes be in ſome good preparation for death, it will not ſurprize you wholly unready, when you daily caſt up your accounts, you will be better ac-

quainted with your own ſpirituall eſtate, you will ſee what progreſſe you make in the way towards Heaven, what ground you gain of your corruptions, where Satan hath moſt advantage againſt you, what ſinne you are moſt frequently overtaken with, what is the weakeſt place of your ſoul, you will likewiſe be kept hereby from lying long in any ſin unrepented of, if *David* had conſtantly obſerved this courſe, he had never lyen ſo long as he did in carnall ſecurity, you may likewiſe do well to take ſpeciall notice of the paſſages of Gods providence towards you. And to keep a record or journall of the more remarkable paſſages of your lives, is a practice commen-

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ded by divers godly men from their own experience, for direction wherein you may ſerve your ſelves of the uſefull labours of my worthy Friend Mr *Bedle*, in his diary of a thankfull Chriſtian, and further this review of Gods dealings with you and your carriage towards him, will furniſh you with matter of confeſſion, petition, thanksgiving, and put you upon the freſh exerciſe of your faith, and renewing your hold on Jeſus Chriſt in your Evening Prayers.

Direct. 10. *Awake with God in the Morning*, I have diſpoſed of this rule here, becauſe of the dependance which it hath on that which goeth before: this was *Davids* practice, *Pſalm* 139. 17, 18.

17, 18. How precious are thy thoughts, *i. e.* the thoughts which I have of thee; the affix in the hebrew notes, oft the Object and not the Subject, as *Gen.* 16. 5. *Jer.* 32. 40.

1. *God viſits us every morning, Job* 7. 18. *Lam.* 3. 23.

2. Then our hearts are fitteſt for Heavenly Meditation, when our ſpirits are refreſhed, and our hearts have not yet been intangled with the things of the world.

3. If holy thoughts do not firſt take place, Satan will ſoon thruſt in, *our hearts are* (as *Bernard* ſaith) *like a mill that grinds every thing that is put upon it, whether good or bad, Med. devot. cap.* 10. ſee there how he complains

plains of the ſad effect of giving way to evill thoughts, how his heart was thereby eſtranged from the love of Heavenly things.

4. This is neceſſary for getting our hearts into a right frame, for walking with God all the day, if we would have our watch go right all the day we muſt wind it up in the morning, ſo we had need to wind up our hearts every morning, if we would *order our converſation aright.* 1. Then let us meditate on the goodneſſe of God towards us particularly the night paſt, our protection, preſervation, refreſhment that God ſhould think of us, when we cannot think of him, take care of us when we can take none

of

of our ſelves, watch over us while we ſleep, keep us from ſleeping the ſleep of death, and bethink your ſelves what thanks you ſhould render to the Lord for his gracious dealings with you, and how you may return the uſe of that life to him which he reſtores to you every morning and to this end. 2. review the account which you took of your ſelves the night before, ſee wherein it was that you was moſt eaſily overtaken, where Satan got an advantage againſt you, whether you were not ready to offend with your tongue in company, whether your heart did not ſteal from you in holy duties, whether vain thoughts did not devour the time of your ſolitude,

what

what baits you found your hearts moſt ready to riſe to, what are the uſuall out-goings of your hearts, what evill haunts they have; whether pride and vain glory, ſenſuality, raſh anger, peeviſhneſſe, impatience, or what other ſin hath the greateſt advantage againſt you: and conſider what temptations you are like to meet with that day which may moſt endanger you, and having found out the plague of your own hearts, 3. Furniſh your ſelves with the ſtrongeſt arguments againſt ſuch a ſin, (which you may gather up as you meet with them in your hearing or reading,) and enforce them upon your own ſouls by communing with your hearts, till you have brought

your

your selves to some fixed resolutions of *cleaving to the Lord*, Act. 11. 23. Psal. 119. 106. some advise us for the confirming our resolutions, to lay some penalty upon our selves every time we fail of making them good, of which you may see severall instances in *Drexelius* his *Trismegistus Christianus*, lib. 1. cap. 6. But although some of them savour too much of Popish Superstition, yet godly sorrow doth work an holy revenge, 2 *Cor*.7.11. which we may take upon our selves, by denying our selves the use of our lawfull liberty in those things wherein we have abused it, or wherein we are in danger, again to abuse it if we should take it; and watch-

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ing our own hearts as we would watch a thief, when we are caſt upon ſuch temptations as we have formerly been eaſily enſnared by *Prov.*23. 1,2. 4. Having by the forementioned Meditations brought our hearts to ſome fixed reſolutions, let us not truſt to our own purpoſes, but in the next place, go to God, in whom we have both *ſtrength and righteouſneſſe*, Eſay.45.24. and *commit the keeping of our ſouls to him in well doing*, 1 Pet.4.19. and as we may be furniſhed with matter for our Prayers in the evening, from the account which we take of our ſelves, ſo in the morning from our early Meditations, and that is the reaſon why I have not (as many others that

write

write exerciſes of devotion) either ſet down any form of Prayer, or directed you to any, he willnot need any form of Prayer that practices theſe duties, to lead his affections, or teach him to expreſs his deſires before God in ſecret, and for family duties, it is not my purpoſe here to treat of them: and if any ſhall object that this exerciſe in the morning, requires more time then they can ſpare, being forced to ariſe to their labour aſſoone as they awake: I anſwer, Chriſtians may abound in theſe things as their occaſions will allow them, ſome I know cannot ſpend ſo much time in them as others, but they may be the briefer, and if they ſhould have no more time

to spare then while they are putting on their cloathes, they may briefly run over some such things in their thoughts, as I have directed them to, and make a supply to the want of time, by a more *earnest intention of their minds*, to what they are exercised in.

HAving in the foregoing *directions* commended the work of self examination to Christians, as an exercise which may justly challenge a part of their solitary houres, and considering how unskilfull many are therein, and yet how needfull it is for getting and maintaining assurance which is not only so generally

nerally deſired of all Chriſtians, but of ſuch uſe to us, in the performance of duties, bearing afflictions, reſiſting temptations: (three things wherein our Chriſtian buſineſſe chiefly lies) I have thought good to add ſomething here for the help of the weak therein : I know many have at large treated of this thing, and to more ſatisfaction then I can here expect to give : yet it will (I beleeve) be an advantage to ſome, to have theſe brief directions at hand, and others which need them not, may let them alone, and they will be no burden to them. I ſhall comprize what I have to ſay herein under theſe two directions.

1. *Make choice of fit rules to meaſure*

meaſure your condition by.

2. *Be careſull rightly to apply your ſelves to theſe rules, that you may make a true judgment of your condition thereby.*

For the Firſt, The *rule* that you meaſure your ſelf by, muſt be neither too long nor too ſhort, but adæquate to the ſtate of a Chriſtian, that is, it muſt not be ſo long as that all Chriſtians cannot reach it, nor ſo ſhort as that it will not reach a true Chriſtian, but ſuch as will fit every ſincere believer and none elſe; ſome judg of themſelves by ſuch trials or evidences, as are competent only to thoſe that are of an high growth in Chriſtianity, and have attained to a great meaſure of grace: theſe hearing ſome (perhaps)

haps) glorying in their spiritual enjoyments, and attainments (the testimony of the spirit, the sweet ravishments of their soules in communion with Jesus Christ, their contempt of the world. (whether justly or no God knows) and others in describing the state of a Christian, shewing rather what of right it should be, then what indeed it is, what Christians ought to be, rather then what they find themselves to be. Or it may be reading in Scripture the high strains of others devotion, as *David's panting after God*, Psal. 42. 1. *&c.* his *following hard after him*, Psal. 63. 8. his *dwelling with God by Heavenly Meditations*, Psal. 139. 17, 18. *Pauls holy zeal*, Act. 20. 24. his

desire

desire of being with Christ in glory, *Phil.* 1. 23. the stability and evennesse of his spirit in every condition, *Phi.* 4. 12. they begin to lament their own condition; alas, it is not thus with me; how unlike am I to others of the Children of God? these are things which I am so far from having attained to, that I dispair of ever reaching them. But I may (with a little alteration of the Apostles words, 2 *Cor.* 10. 12.) say of these, *that measuring themselves with others they are not wise*, these things may serve for the triall of the growth of their grace, not of the truth of it: they may discover their imperfections, not their unsoundnesse, they may be matter of humiliation and emulation

lation to such as have not attained thereto, but not of discouragement or dispaire. Others on the other hand, blesse themselves in a faire civill deportment, in a specious performance of duties of justice and charity towards men, and piety towards God: now, these things are good and it is both honourable to our Christian profession, and comfortable to our selves, to have the testimony of our consciences concerning these things, but these alone do not reach the state of a true believer; *Paul* attained thus far before his conversion, *Phil.* 3. 5, &c. So that you see without a carefull observation of this first rule which I have set down;

down; We shall be in danger, either of disquieting our selves with needlesse fears, or flattering our selves with vain and groundlesse hopes.

2. You must carefully apply your selves to these rules; If a man have the most exact measure or rule, if he do not rightly apply what he hath to measure thereunto, but either ruffle it up, or stretch it too much out, he will never take a right measure of it. Christians are usually very inquisitive after true marks or evidences of a justified person, and when they come to a Minister to consult about their spirituall condition, or hear them upon an use of examination, they expect presently to hear whether

they ſhall be ſaved or damned: as if Miniſters could as infallibly tell them their future condition, as Conjurers pretend to tell men their fortune, when alas, after all the directions that we are able to give, the greateſt work remains for Chriſtians to do themſelves, and if they be not faithfull to themſelves therein, it is impoſſible for us to help them.

1. Then labour to be well acquainted with your own hearts, obſerve diligently the carriage of them, their riſings to or cloſings with the baits of Satan: their complyance with temptations: their reſentments after ſlips or falls, how they are affected with them, the outgoings of them towards God, and towards

the Creature, what are their uſuall haunts, in ſhort, be as curious and criticall in obſerving your ſelves, as thoſe who are the greateſt buſie bodies in other mens matters can be in the obſervation of others: that ſo you may not be ſtrangers at home, but may accoring to the ſage precept of the heathen, know your ſelves.

2. Do not judge your ſelves by any particular action, or by the frame of your ſpirit at ſome ſeaſons; for an Hypocrite may ſometimes do that which is materially good, as a Godly man may ſometimes do that which is evill; whereof *David*, *Sampſon*, *Peter*, and others in Scripture, are ſad inſtances, ſo a wicked

man may ſometimes have his heart in a ſerious frame, under the ſmart of ſome *outward affliction*, (when ſence convinces them of that, which at other times they are backward to beleeve) as *Pſal.* 78. 34. or under powerfull convictions of the word, as thoſe compared with the *ſtony ground*, Luk. 8. 13. ſo a godly man may ſometimes be in a wofull frame, as *David*, 2 Sam. 11. one would have thought that had never known him before, that he had been a man of a ſeared conſcience, that had ſung away care, and baniſhed the fear of God from before his eyes, and *Jonah* was little better, *Jonah* 4. 9. but we muſt obſerve what is the conſtant habituall frame of

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our hearts, and the ordinary carriage of our lives: a godly man in Scripture is deſcribed, not by his particular actions, but by his walking, which imports his ſetled courſe, and the generall tenour of his converſation, *Pſa.* 11. 119. *Rom.* 8. 1. indeed to be frequently overtaken with ſinne, is an ill ſign, yet to determine how oft a godly man may be overtaken by temptation, or how many ſinſull actions are inconſiſtent with ſincerity; is as impoſſible in Divinity, as to determine in morality, how many actions go to the acquiring of an habit. In ſuch a caſe there is much need of a ſpirituall diſcerning, and a prudent weighing of particular circumſtances, for the

making of a right and ſafe judgment.

3. In judging our ſelves, we muſt have ſome reſpect to naturall temper and inclinations, and to the temptations which our condition laies us moſt open to. A little Sugar ſerves for ſweet wines, but there is more required to ſweeten that which is more ſharp, ſo, a little grace makes a great ſhew in ſome tempers, and a great deal ſcarce appears in others, as an eminent man ſaid of one, now in Heaven; that he had grace enough for Ten other men, but ſcarce enough for himſelf, which he would himſelf bewail, ſaying, he had ſuch a crooked nature, that if God had not given him grace, none would have

have bin able to live a day with him. Solikewiſe the more inoffen ſivelives of ſome men, it may be imputed rather to the want of temptations, then to a greater meaſure of grace. The truth is, a mans ſincerity is much diſcovered, in keeping him *from his own iniquity*, Pſal. 18. 23. and overcoming temptations when he is *aſſaulted therewith*, Prov. 24. 10. Yet let a man have an equall tincture of ſupernaturall grace in all the affections of his ſoul; Let the Spirit of God diſſuſe it ſelf like leaven, indifferently through the whole lump; yea, let a man beſtow alſo the moſt care in watching his own heart, in ſome particular outgoings of it, he ſhall notwithſtand-

ing find himſelf moſt defective in that very thing; and (as Dr *Preſton* rightly obſerves,) thoſe ſinnes are with the moſt difficulty mortified, which our naturall temper doth moſt diſpoſe us to. Some affections are more predominant in one age, ſome in another: there are *youthfull luſts*, 2 Tim. 2. 22. and infirmities more proper to old age. So God likewiſe ſuits mens tempers many times, to the imployments which he reſerves them for: *Moſes* was the *meekeſt man on earth*, Num. 12.3. and ſo he had need to be, who had ſuch a perverſe provoking generation of men to deal with. *Luther* was a fierce hot ſpirited man, and he was thereby fitted for the work

which

which he had to do, which was to ſtand as a brazen wall againſt the whole world, and choller is not only *Cos ingenii*, to whet the wit (as the Philoſophers ſay,) but it ads vigour and activity to mens ſpirits, fitting them or action, as the ſting in the Bee, without which ſhe is but a drone, and I am inclinable to think, that *Luther* had as much of the grace of meekneſſe as of charity or bounty; but being of a generous ſpirit naturally, he would ſay he never found the leaſt inclination to covetuouſneſſe, whereas his paſſionate fierceneſſe made his converſation very unpleaſing, and put poore *Melanchon* to cry out, *Vince animos iramque tuam, qui cætera vincis.* So for temp-

tations, they may make those graces yield, wherein Christians (if in any) do most excell, as we see in the case of *Job*, who was an *eminent example of patience*, Jam. 5. 11. yet we do not observe in his Story; that any grace which he had gave out somuch as his patience, because that bare the burden and heat of the day; his condition did most exercise that: and this must be observed both in judging our selves, and others; thou perhaps seest more failings in another then in thy self be it so, and that thou art not partial to thyself, yet this may be, not because thou hast more grace, but beause he hath more temptations.

4. Take heed of prejudice; I mean, any thing that may corrupt

rupt thy judgment in trying thy ſelf. There are ſome things which make Chriſtians ſeem leſſe in their own eyes, then they are: and that is the reaſon why we ordinarily hear thoſe, who may be thought to have the beſt hearts, making the ſaddeſt complaints againſt themſelves. There are many graces, the more a Chriſtian hath of them, the worſe he thinks of of himſelf; the more knowledg a Chriſtian hath, the more he ſees of the extent of the Law of God, and the more clear apprehenſion he hath of his duty; and, ſo he ſees more of his own defects. We ſhall ſee that this made *Paul* think worſe of himſelf after his converſion then he did before;

fore; if we compare *Phil.* 3.5,6. with *Rom.* 7. 9. 2. The more livelineſſe and tenderneſſe of ſpirit a Chriſtian hath, the more ſenſible he is of his corruption; as thoſe who are more tender and delicate, are more troubled at ſuch things as are offenſive to them, then thoſe who are of a more dull heavy temper, 3. The more humility a man hath, the meaner thoughts he hath of himſelf, and of his ſervices. 4. The more love a man hath to Jeſus Chriſt, the more free he is of his ſervice to him; and, ſo more affected with his own infirmities, when he fals ſhort of what he hath an heart to do for him, 5. The more the ſoul *hungers and thirſts after righteouſneſſe;*

ouſneſſe; The leſſe doth any meaſure of grace ſeem, which it hath already received: as a coveteous man, who thirſts after more wealth, is alwayes complaining of his poverty, and thinks that to be nothing which he hath already. And as the beſt Chriſtians do oft thus wrong themſelves, ſo other that have leſſe of theſe graces, are prone to think too highly of themſelves.

Now before I conclude, I muſt ſay ſomething in anſwer to a queſtion, which will be eaſily occaſioned, by what hath bin already ſpoken. Since we are to try our ſelves by an adæquate rule, and by ſuch evidences as are competent to all juſtified

persons, and to them only, *what are those proper Characters of a true Christian?* I cannot here discourse at large of the severall graces of the spirit, and shew how they may be distinguished from their counterfeits: yet that I may do something towards the satisfaction of Christians in this particular; I shall first endeavour to explain the true nature of saving faith, and then to discover so far as I am able, what is the genuine temper and disposition of a Child of God.

For the First, It is that which our salvation depends upon, and I choose alwayes to describe it, in the words of our common Chatechisme, which I would never willingly swerve from, but keep close

cloſe to, that ſo Chriſtians may be more ſecure in entertaining the truth, and free from ſuſpicion of being miſguided by the ſingular notions of a private ſpirit: Now there it is deſcribed, a ſaveing grace, whereby we receive Jeſus Chriſt, and reſt upon him for ſalvation, as he is offered to us in the Goſpell. I confeſſe, I do not look upon this as an accurate definition of Faith, properly ſo called; yet, as conſonant to the Scriptures manner of teaching. Divinity being a practicall diſcipline, the holy Ghoſt in Scripture doth not define things as a Philoſopher, by their *genus & differentia*, but by their *effects*. See the Scriptures definition of *wiſdome*, Job 28. 28. of *knowledge*

ledge, Jer. 16. 22. of *faith*, Heb. 11. 1. of the *feare of God*, Pro. 8. 13. of the *love of God*, 1 Joh. 5. 3. of *Religion*, Jam. 1. 27. Faith is properly an assent to any thing upon the authority of him that affirms it, and so more particularly divine Faith, is an assent to any truth upon Gods authority: but because it is not so easie to make a right judgement of the acts of the understanding, as they have an existence in their Subject, however we may speak something of the difference of them, as they are in their *Idea*: the Scripture takes notice of them when they come lower into the Will, and observes what work they make, or what effect they have there, and thereby

thereby judges whether they be right or no; but let me a little explain this diſcription of Faith, that ſo we may the better underſtand the nature of it: It is called *a Grace*, becauſe it is a *gift freely given*, Eph. 2.8. *a ſaving Grace*, becauſe it is one of thoſe things which accompany Salvation, *Mark* 16. 16. It is ſaid to be a *grace whereby we receive Jeſus Chriſt*. Now I confeſſe I do not ſee that the place uſually alledged for the proof hereof, *John* 1. 12. doth convincingly prove it; ſince it may be otherwiſe expounded, what inconvenience would follow, if we ſhould take the word receive in a larger ſence as it is uſed, *Mat.*10.14. and the words following not *exegeticè*,

as

as an exposition of what went before, but *restrictivè*, as a limitation thereof: the like restriction we have, *Psal.* 145. 18. yet Faith may properly be called a *a receiving of Jesus Christ*, it being the first act of the Will about the means leading to our end; which act the Schoolemen call Election, (hence I suppose Dr *Ames Rolloc*, and others borrow this term, which they make use of in explaining the nature of Faith,) which they make to be, an accepting of this or that means, or chosing it before others, (by the approbation of the judgement) as best conduceing to the attainment of our end. Or to speak more plainly, and properly, (which is best,) if we consider

consider Jesus Christ as the *gift of God, offered to us in the Gospel,* (as is expressed in the foregoing description,) Faith is our receiving of him, accepting of Gods offer, taking hold on Gods Covenant, striking hands with him, consenting freely that Christ shall be ours. I cannot stand here to examine how necessary our acceptation is, to the making a thing our own, or a gift properly to us: or whether a man may in any case have, not only *jus ad rem* or *title*, but *jus in re* or *possession*, without his consent or acceptance: remembering the end of my discourse, which such disquisitions would have little tendency to. Therefore to proceed; It is added in this

this discription of Faith, that it is a *resting upon Jesus Christ for Salvation*; The former words do aptly expresse the first *act* of *Faith*, which is the souls fixing, or pitching upon Christ in its choice, as the only sufficient means of Salvation: These words hold forth the *porro esse*, (as I may speak) of *Faith*, or the *continued act of it*, upon the souls *former choice*: So that as a learned man, Dr *Wallis* in his most ingenious answer to the L. *Bro.* doth well observe, it is all one whether we make Faith to be a receiving of Christ for our Saviour, or a resting upon him for Salvation: Some choose to expresse it by the former act, some by the latter: for the latter doth necessarily

necessarily suppose the former, and the former immediately infer the latter, if we consider how Christ is offered in the Gospell, that is as the only *Saviour*, Act. 4. 12. and as a sufficient *Saviour*, Heb. 7. 25. but here observe, that by a *resting on Jesus Christ*, we do not mean a *confirmed hope*, or a certain *expectation* of Salvation by Jesus Christ: this is an *effect* of assurance, but the *leaning*, *rolling*, *staying*, of the soul upon Jesus Christ, which we may conceive of, by the notion which the Scripture oft holds it forth under, a *looking to him*, or *having our eyes towards him*, read 2 Chron. 20. 12. Psal. 121. 1. & 123. 1, 2. Isai. 45. 22. Jonah 2. 4. Mic. 7. 7. this *act* the

the ſoul may put forth without *aſſurance.* Of the difference between theſe two acts, ſee Dr *Ward de fide juſtificante, cap.* 8. *&.* 23. and (in Engliſh) Dr *Bolton.* Of the nature of Faith, *pag.* 60. 61. This latter act is aptly expreſſed, by Mr *Cotton,* (a man of much Chriſtian experience,) on 1 *Joh.* 5. 10. whoſe words I ſhall ſet down, becauſe they are ſuited to the capacity and experience of weak Chriſtians. [*There is* (ſaith he) *a beleeving on Chriſt, when the heart doth not yet reſt on him, but roll it ſelf on him; and that may be done while the heart is yet in motion; reſting is a ſetledneſſe of condition, but rolling is an unſetled tumbling about, ſometimes one way, and ſometimes another,*

nother: yet ſuch a Chriſtian believs on Chriſt, becauſe he is rolling towards him, that ſo he may lye on him, Pſal. 37. 5. Commit thy way to the Lord, *according to the Originall, it is* roll thy way upon the Lord, *lean thy ſoul that way, which is done by rolling thy ſelf towards him, that thou maiſt reſt upon him*, Prov. 16. 3. *a man may be ſaid to lean on that whereon he is not ſetled.*] And indeed the Hebrews expreſſe the act of affiance, by the word גלל which ſignifies to *roll*, Pſal. 22. 8. Let the Reader only obſerve, that Mr *Cotton* takes reſting in a ſtricter ſence then we do in the former deſcription, when he oppoſeth it to rolling, he underſtands thereby the

the *affiance of hope*, which *followes assurance*. To come then to the question, dost thou freely accept of Jesus Christ for thy Saviour? art thou heartily willing to strike hands with God in the Covenant of grace? and though thou hast not a particular assurance that Christ will save thee, dost thou look towards him? dost thou roll thy self upon him, though unbeleeving thoughts return oft and presse hard upon thee? (as a man may roll a burden upon something, and it may return oft upon him again, before he can make it lye.) Thy condition is very comfortable. But here it will be objected, that there are some that for a time

beleeve

beleeve and yet fall *away*, Luke 8. 13. I confeſſe this caſe is very difficult, yet I ſhall give the objection a fair hearing before I anſwer it : Indeed I do beleeve that there is a reall intrinſick difference between the firſt act of *juſtifying Faith*, and the *Faith* of a *temporary* : yet many times this difference is not diſcernable by the perſons themſelves which ſo beleeve, that you may underſtand what I mean; Suppoſe two men under the ſame affliction, as the *Iſraelites*, Pſalm 78. 31. &c. or both hearing the word together, as *Luke* 8. 13. Theſe men may be ſo wrought upon, as that they may both make the ſame reſolution, (as ſeems

to themſelves,) with alike ſeriouſneſſe, and without diſſimulation, freely taking Chriſt for their Saviour, or caſting themſelves upon him for Salvation, they may have the ſame apprehenſions concerning their own acts themſelves, one of theſe may fall, the other perſevere. This is that which hath been long ſince taught, ſee *Dyke* on the deceitfulneſſe of the heart, *cap.* 20. where ſpeaking of the *Iſraelites,* Pſalm 78. 34. he ſaies, *they ſpake as they thought and meant to do.* See likewiſe more fully on this, Dr *Jackſon,* of Faith, *cap.* 7. *Paragr.* 14. And it is generally acknowledged, that there are

no

not onely groſſe Hypocrites, that deceive others, but cloſe Hypocrites that deceive them ſelves. But how comes it to paſſe, that one *ſtands* and another falls? I anſwer, as it is in colours, two things may appear at firſt of the *ſame* colour, one *abides*, the other *fades*, now the *reaſon* of this is, there is an *addition* of ſome *ingredient*, which gives the one a more laſting tincture then the other; one is died in *grain*, the other hath but an *ordinary* dye. So to thoſe *rationall Motives* which are the *inducements* both to the one, and to the other to beleeve, there is in one, the *addition* of a *ſpiritually infuſion*, which gives to

one mans Faith a true and abiding *tincture*, there is a *ſeed of God abiding in him*, 1 Joh. 3. 9. You will ſay, if it be *thus*, how ſhall we ever come to any *certainty* concerning our *own* condition, if we may be deceived in the *acts* of our *own* ſouls? If it be ſaid, that we muſt know the truth of our Faith by the triall of it in ſtanding out againſt temptations; this is ſomething indeed, But what time muſt we take for the triall of our Faith? When may we confirme the truth of it with a *probatum eſt*? when ſhall I know that the worſt triall is over? Some ſtood out in the time of Queen *Maries* perſecution; which afterwards

wards fell away in time of liberty and proſperity: *Joab* turned not after *Abſalom*, but he turned after *Adonijah*: Though I turne not after one temptation, I may after another, and ſo we muſt conclude, There is no aſſurance to be had (without ſpeciall revelation,) by this meanes while we are in this life, *dicique beatus, ante obitum nemo*, &c. Having thus urged the Objection with all its ſtrength, I anſwer, there is yet another way for the triall of our Faith, although many times in the firſt act of Faith, (as *Streſo* obſerves) the ſoul is not ſo deliberate, it doth not ſtand to debate the matter long, or to form *Syllogiſmes*, but preſſed with the ap-

prehension of its danger, laies hold on what is next to save it, and flees for refuge to the *hope that is set before it:* yet afterwards, when it comes more deliberately to recognize its former act, (which he is supposed to have opportunity for, who is enquiring after the sincerity of his Faith,) in this recognition or renewing the act of Faith, there is that which doth clearly difference it from a temporaries Faith; Therefore there are *three* things which I shall lay down, which may serve both to direct Christians in the exercise of their Faith, and the frequent renewing of their *hold* on Jesus Christ, and to try the sincerity of

Faith

Faith, in the renewed acts of it.

1. *Sit down, and count the cost of being the Disciples of Christ*, Luke 14. 26. And see in the two foregoing verses the occasion of these words. Consider, That Christ will *rule* you if he *save* you, and that his lawes are not suited to your carnall interests, or corrupt lusts: we must take Christ as he is *offered in the Gospell*, God hath condescended there, as far as he will; he cannot be brought to lower termes. Indeed in the first act of Faith, usually the soul hath chief respect to pardon, as that which it is then most sensible of the want of: the soul therein *flees*

for refuge to Christ, Heb. 6. 18. *flees from the wrath to come*, Matth. 3. 7. but though pardoning grace be *ratio motiva*, or the first inducement to bring us to Jesus Christ, yet it must not be *ratio terminativa*, or that which must bound our desires after him. Here now the Hypocrite fails, when he comes to see what it is to be a *Disciple of Christ*, he repents of his repentance, and comes off with a *non putâram*: Christ had many followers, while they saw his miracles, and he was likely to be made an earthly King, but they *turned their backs on him*, when they understood the *nature* of his *service*, John 6. 16,

16, 60, 66. Many under the laſh of affliction, or the convictions of the Word, betake themſelves to Chriſt for *ſhelter*, but afterwards deſpiſe the *ſimplicity of the Goſpel*, and the *ſtrictneſſe of holineſſe*; as one that in a ſtorm takes ſhelter in a cottage, where he would not be afterwards perſwaded to dwell; or borrowes a coat, which after the ſhower is over he would ſcorne to weare: but *Paul*, when he came to make a recognition of his former act, *Phil.* 3. 7, 8. He *ſtands to his former choice* and *judgement*, *Thoſe things* (ſaith he) *that were gain to me, I counted loſſe for Chriſt: yea, doubtleſſe, and I do count all*

things loſſe, &c.

2. *Bring your wills to a firm determinate reſolution*, Pſal. 119. 106. Acts 11. 23. When men have not brought their wills to this conſiſtency, they are like fluid bodies which as we ſay, *Facilè continentur alienis terminis*, do yield to the form or figure of every veſſel which they are put into: So theſe *double-minded men are unſtable as water*, like *Reuben*, Gen. 49. 4. faſhoning themſelves to every occurrence which they meet with, receiving the impreſſion of every thing that is applyed to them; when the Word comes with *power* upon their ſouls, they are quite borne down with it, and

and are *all for Chriſt*; and when the *world* and *ſin* have an opportunity to ſet upon them, they *yield thereto*; this was (as *Maldonate* ſaith) the fault of the ſtony ground, they had not *magnam & profundam voluntatem*: ſuch unſtable men invite temptations, whereas a firm reſolution *prevents them*; it *diſcourages the importunity of men*, Acts 21. 14. yea, *it puts Satan to flight*, Jam. 4. 7.

3. *Commit the keeping of your ſouls to God in well-doing*, 1 Pet. 4. 18. none fitter then *Peter* to give this counſell, who had found by experience, how vain it is to make reſolutions in our *own ſtrength*, Matth. 26. 33, *&c.* we muſt not only

believe

believe on Christ for salvation, but to be *kept by his power to Salvation*, 1 Pet. 1. 5. and God will not faile such as do thus *wait on him*, Esai. 40. 28. though others (that like young men are most confident of their own strength) may fall. Now then canst thou in sincerity goe to God and say? Lord, I know that it is no easie matter to *deny my selfe*, to *cut off my right hand*, to *pluck out my right eye*, to *part with those sinnes which are most usefull, most deare to me*, yet this *I must do*, if I will be the *Disciple* of *Christ*, yet having counted both the losse and the gain, which I shall thereby have, I

freely

freely choose Christ for my portion, let him do what he will with me, and bring me to Heaven which way ſeems good to him; I am reſolved to *cleave to him*, through the aſſiſtance of thy grace, who (though I am not able to think any thing of my ſelfe yet) art able to keep that *good thing which I commit to thee*, 2 Tim. 1. 12. I know not what a ſoul ſhould do more in the act of Faith, if ten heavens depended upon it.

I will very briefly adde ſomething of the *temper* of a gracious ſoul, 1. It hath a *true love to Jeſus Christ*, 1 Corinth. 16. 22. John 14. 21. and this is ſooner diſcerned

cerned by the *inward inclination* and *affections of the heart*, then the *outward actions* of the life: Doſt thou breath after more inward communion with him? Doſt thou lament inwardly after him? though it may be thou haſt not ſuch a melting ſpirit as Mr *Bradford*, who could ſit and weep at dinner, till the tears fell on his trencher, becauſe he could love God no more, yet is it a reall trouble to thee, that thou canſt love him no more, nor do him better ſervice? Such a diſpoſition I am ſure cannot be without active endeavours: but theſe are *diſcoveries* of a *divine nature*. 2. A gracious ſoul is *carefull to pleaſe God*, though it doth not know whether God love

love it or no; this is a true filiall diſpoſition, when a Child is willing to pleaſe its Father, and is ready to do any thing wherein it may be ſerviceable to him, though its Father will not (it may be) give it a good look, nor take any notice of it: if a ſoul find this diſpoſition in it ſelf, let it *ſtay it ſelf upon its God*, hold *thy ſelf by him*, he *bids thee, he will not caſt thee of*, read Eſai. 50. 10. 3. A Child of God *hates ſin*, God *hates it*, Jer. 44. 4. and he that is *joyned* to the Lord is one *ſpirit*, 1 Cor. 6. 16. And this is diſcovered in a general averſion *from all ſin*, hatred is againſt the whole kind: ſome men feare ſinne, but they do not hate it, many are affraid to be wh[illegible]

ſome Creatures are, leſt they ſhould do them hurt, but if they are ſure that they are faſt chained, they are well enough; but where there is an antipathy, ſuch cannot endure to be neare thoſe Creatures, though they are ſure they cannot hurt them: ſo many are affraid of ſuch ſinnes as may *damn* them, or bring them to *ſhame*, or ſome other inconvenience in this *world*; but a godly man abhors his *ſecret corruptions*, which he knows the beſt that go to Heaven are troubled with, whilſt they are here, and which he knows will not hinder his worldly intereſt; or as others aptly illuſtrate it, many are affraid to touch a *cole* when it is *hot*, for fear of *burning* them: but thoſe who

who are more curious cannot indure to touch it when it is *cold*, leaſt it ſhould *black* them: a wicked man is affraid to meddle with ſuch ſinnes as may *damn* him; a godly man is offended with ſuch ſinnes as may *defile* him. Thus, Reader, I have endeavoured to help thee in this great work, but if thou doſt not ſet thy ſelf with all diligence hereto, my labour is in vain: yea, ſo it will be, unleſſe the Lord ſet in by his *own Spirit*, to put forward the ſame. Though the Prophet had told *David* plainly, that the *Lord had put away his ſin*, 2 Sam. 12. 13. that would not ſilence the clamours of a guilty conſcience, nor quiet and calm his troubled ſpirit, but he muſt ſue to God, to *reſtore*

to

to him the joy of his salvation, Ps. 51. 12. It may be now in the reading of this small tract, thou maist observe many defects which might have bin supplied, and other things which might have bin more aptly expressed: but I have neither had leisure, nor any great desire, (if I were able) to prevent such a censure, by putting a second hand hereto. If thou dost discover any of my weaknesses, thou wilt thereby learn not to think of me above what is meet: and I do not fear that it should hinder the use of the Book by any, for I can neither expect nor desire that it should borrow any credit from the Author, or be of any authority, or prevalency with any, save according to the *Evidence* which

which it carries with it; and the *bleſſing* of him that *gives* the *increaſe*, both to *him that plants*, and to *him that waters*.

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FINIS.

P
wa
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Errata.

PReface page laſt, after *ſhame* read *me*. p. 2. l. 15. r. 1 *John* 2. p. 6. l. 20. for *words* r. *worſhip*. p. 17. l. 13. for *Sodom*, r. *the old world*, p. 77. l. 3. blot out *it*. p. 79. l. 7. for *or* r. *for*.

There are other literall faults, and many miſpointings; which thoſe who can obſerve them, will know alſo how to correct.